

Appl. No. : **10/805,766**
Filed : **March 22, 2004**

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 17-20 and 25-27 without prejudice.

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Original) A hand-held flossing device, comprising:

a housing having a handle portion and a head portion, the housing supporting a floss supply comprising a floss, a floss path, a floss advancement mechanism configured to selectively advance floss from the floss supply and through the path, and a stop mechanism configured to selectively engage at least a portion of the floss to resist advancement of the floss upon actuation of the advancement mechanism so that a tension is imparted to the floss between the stop mechanism and the advancement mechanism;

the floss comprising a first surface coating comprising a water soluble material and a second surface coating comprising a generally non-water soluble material, the second coating substantially encapsulating the first coating.

2. (Original) The hand-held flossing device of Claim 1, wherein the first coating comprises a multi-wax, and the second coating comprises beeswax.

3. (Currently Amended) A hand-held flossing device, comprising:

a housing having a handle portion and a head portion;

a series of ratchet receiver members integrally formed with the housing;

a floss supply comprising a floss; and

a floss supply path defined within the housing between the floss supply and a floss exit formed in the head portion, a floss return path defined within the housing between a floss entrance and an advancement mechanism, a wall disposed between the floss supply path and the floss return path in the housing head portion, floss being directed through the floss supply and return paths, the floss exiting through the exit and reentering through the entrance, an exposed floss portion extending between the exit and entrance;

wherein the advancement mechanism is configured to selectively advance floss from the supply and through the supply and return paths, and the advancement mechanism comprises a flexible-ratcheting member adapted to engage the series of ratcheting receiver members of the housing.

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4. (Currently Amended) The flossing device of Claim 3, wherein the advancement mechanism ~~ratcheting member~~ comprises a rotatable member having an axle about which floss from the return path is wound, a wheel that rotates with the axle, a portion of the wheel accessible from outside of the housing, and wherein the ratcheting member is disposed on the wheel.

5. (Currently Amended) The flossing device of Claim 4, wherein the rotatable member comprises a guard disposed on a side of the axle opposite the ~~ratcheting member~~wheel, and the floss from the return path is wound about the axle between the wheel and the guard.

6. (Currently Amended) The flossing device of Claim 5, wherein the rotatable member is disposed in the handle forwardly of the floss supply, and the floss supply path extends past the rotatable member on a side of the guard opposite the ~~axle~~wheel.

7. (Original) The flossing device of Claim 4, wherein the return path has a greater minimum width along its length than the supply path.

8. (Original) The flossing device of Claim 4 additionally comprising a stop mechanism disposed in the supply path between the floss supply and the advancement mechanism, the stop mechanism configured to selectively prevent advancement of the floss.

9. (Original) The flossing device of Claim 8, wherein the stop mechanism comprises a friction lock, and the friction lock and advancement member are configured so that a user can selectively apply between about 0-15 pounds of tension to floss between the stop mechanism and the advancement mechanism.

10. (Original) The flossing device of Claim 9, wherein the user can selectively apply between about 0-10 pounds of tension to the floss, and the stop mechanism and advancement mechanism are actuatable by one of the user's hands holding the device.

11. (Original) The flossing device of Claim 9, wherein the friction lock comprises a movable member and a stationary member, wherein the floss is selectively pinched between the movable and stationary members, and the stationary member comprises a truss configured to prevent substantial deflection when the movable member engages the stationary member.

12 - 20. Cancelled

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21. (Currently Amended) The flossing device of Claim 3319, wherein the stop mechanism has a maximum tension limit, and the stop mechanism is configured so that if tension in the floss exceeds the maximum tension limit, the floss will slip relative to the stop mechanism.

22. (Original) The flossing device of Claim 21, wherein the floss has a yield strength greater than the maximum tension limit.

23. (Original) The flossing device of Claim 22, wherein the floss has a yield strength greater than about 20 pounds.

24. (Original) The flossing device of Claim 23, wherein the maximum tension limit is less than about 15 pounds.

25-27. Cancelled

28. (Original) A hand-held flossing device, comprising:

a housing having a handle portion and a head portion;

a floss supply comprising a floss;

a floss supply path defined within the housing between the floss supply and a floss exit formed in the head portion; and

a floss return path defined within the housing between a floss entrance and an advancement mechanism, the advancement mechanism configured to selectively advance floss from the floss supply and through the supply and return paths;

wherein the housing is arranged and configured to include an enclosed truss structure.

29. (Original) The flossing device of Claim 28, wherein the housing comprises a plurality of interior walls, and at least some of the interior walls interact to form an enclosed truss structure.

30. (Original) The flossing device of Claim 29, wherein the device is made of a polymer, and the truss structure and polymer are configured so that if the head of the flossing device is bent up to about 45°, the structural integrity of the floss supply and return paths is preserved.

31. (Previously Presented) The hand-held flossing device of Claim 2, wherein the first coating is deposited directly on the floss.

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32. (Previously Presented) The hand-held flossing device of Claim 29 additionally comprising a stop mechanism disposed within the housing in the supply path between the floss supply and the floss exit, wherein the truss structure is disposed at or adjacent the stop mechanism.

33. (Previously Presented) The hand-held flossing device of Claim 32, wherein a truss structure is disposed forwardly and rearwardly of the stop mechanism.

Please add the following new claim

34. (New) The flossing device of Claim 4, wherein the ratchet receiver members are formed on a wall of the housing that is generally transverse to a longitudinal axis of the rotatable member axle, and the ratcheting member on the wheel engages the ratchet receiver members